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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Economic and Social Conditions
Prevailing at Rubezhnoye

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FOOD AND CLOTHING SUPPLY AND PRICES

1. During our stay in the USSR there was a general shortage of sugar, vegetables, potatoes, and wheat products such as noodles and macaroni. There were seasonal shortages of bread, which became scarce every year in May and June, and of vegetables and eggs, which became increasingly rare with the progress of winter. Prices for these products increased accordingly.
2. In practice, only during Soviet holidays (1 May and 7 June [sic, probably 7 November]) could wheat flour be procured from the State stores (magaziny). We could buy wheat flour in small quantities in the free-market bazaar, but even there it was not always available. In any case, we purchased very little flour, since it was most difficult to bake cakes or pies on the equipment available to us. Toward the end of our stay in the Soviet Union, we could obtain white rolls at any time.
3. The following imported goods could be obtained at State stores: Bata shoes and woolen materials from Czechoslovakia and bicycles and chocolate from East Germany.

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4. The quality and quantity of goods offered for sale increased considerably between [] At the same time prices were reduced to a great extent. Between the currency reform and the time we left the Soviet Union [] price reductions were announced with great fanfare over the radio and through the newspapers on three or four occasions. It often happened that people rushed to the magazin to buy articles at these reduced prices only to find that they were not available. However, occurrences such as this were accepted without complaint.
5. During the last year and a half of our stay [] the difference between magazin and free-market prices was not very great. I cannot furnish the exact details, since I left [] the booklet containing the entries concerning my daily household budget which I kept in the USSR. 25X1X 25X1X
6. Prices which were valid during February-March, [] included: 25X1X

	State <u>Magazin</u> Price/Rubles	Free-Market Price/Rubles
One liter milk	2.80	3.00
One kg. bread	2.50	3.00
One kg. butter		39-42
One kg. sugar		11.00
One egg--summer		1.00
One egg--winter		1.60
One kg. potatoes		ca. 1.00
One kg. pork		16.00
One kg. spinach		3.50
One kg. roasted coffee		75.00
50 gm. tea		10.00
100 gm. chocolate		16-20
100 gm. cocoa		19.00
1 meter woolen material (A-1 quality, imported)		350 -
1 pair linen shoes with rubber soles		40-60
1 kg. flour, very good quality	4.20-5.50	
1 kg. flour, poor quality		5-9
Camera (Rolliflex copy)		100-150

LIVING CONDITIONS OF GERMAN AND SOVIET FAMILIES IN RUBEZHENYE

7. In my opinion, the average Soviet is a primitive human being, who is satisfied with enough bread to still his hunger and the most essential clothes. Comparisons of their standard of living with the living standards of other peoples were made only by those Soviets who had been abroad. I knew a few Ukrainian State magazin salesgirls who had spent the war years in Germany. These girls told us on several occasions how much they had enjoyed their stay in Germany and how much they would like to return to Germany to work. 25X1X
8. The apartments in the USSR were very primitive []
[] The walls were not painted or papered, but whitewashed, with the result that chalk was continually coming off and dirtying clothes. Our family, comprising six persons, had three rooms and a kitchen at our disposal and a tiny boxlike affair which represented the washroom. Smaller families had one room less, but otherwise all apartments were alike.
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9. A warm water heating system was installed, but it worked only during the last few years. Even then, during periods of extreme cold, it did not radiate sufficient heat. Electricity was available but the voltage and the amount allotted varied widely. There were frequent interruptions in the service. Later the current was cut off less frequently, generally in the evening for an hour at a time.
10. Those who lived above the first floor had to fetch water from the yard during the summer and from the apartments located on the first floor during winter. The water closet was without water and it was necessary to flush it with water from a pail. The laundry had to be done in the small kitchen. During the winter the kitchen was the only room that was warm enough to be used regularly.
11. Because we had no contact with the Soviet families, we had no opportunity to visit their apartments. However, in my opinion, the Soviet is unpretentious in every respect and not only so far as food is concerned. Very little furniture, one or two beds or plank beds, one table, two or three chairs, usually constitutes the furnishing of the "good" room. I once saw an old piano in the apartment of a nachalnik.
12. As far as Soviet incomes were concerned, higher-rating employees were paid much better. Laboratory workers received 500 rubles per month, chemists received 1000 rubles per month, and a director received 3,500 rubles per month plus a premium. The more important or supervisory jobs probably are held only by politically reliable Soviets. The Soviets did not seem to be concerned with these differences in income. One had the impression that the average Soviet did not know anything else and was therefore satisfied. If their nachalnik had better apartments or were able to afford more, they probably thought it all right.
3. I do not know whether housing conditions for the Soviets improved during our stay. In our neighborhood an entire group of individual buildings was built. This complex was enclosed by high walls and wire gates/

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The Status of Women and Family Life

4. I do not know whether the Soviet woman is satisfied with her fate. I was struck by the following example of "equal rights": Women do hard labor such as construction work, brick laying, etc. and are supervised by men. I believe that they are more satisfied than men with existing conditions because they are less discriminating than men. I think that the Soviet women considered it only natural that they should work and earn money; it was an economic necessity. The majority of the men were in the armed forces when we were there.
5. The marriage laws were chaotic. When transferred to another town, the Soviet men often married again without getting a divorce. They didn't seem to be concerned about the absence of a divorce, because it was too expensive. There was an abundance of illegitimate children. Women suffered very much under these conditions.

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16. The inhabitants of nurseries and children's homes were very well taken care of according to my superficial observations. Apparently the children were given a political education at an early age, since we could hear them singing patriotic songs while marching to the playgrounds. The parents were probably in no position to extend to the children the same care or to feed them as well as the institutions did.

STRATIFIED SOCIETY

17. In general, I cannot say that a stratified society existed in the Soviet Union. In the plant nachalnik and directors had a preferred status. The composition of this preferred group changed because its members were frequently transferred. Members of the group were in constant fear of these transfers. Members of the preferred group lived in better apartments, were better paid and made more civilized impressions as far as manners and clothes were concerned, and their children were sent to better schools.
18. I did not notice any friction between members of the working class and the intelligentsia. Women doctors and women street sweepers greeted each other as if they were equals. If someone earned more than the next person, the fact was accepted as such. The Soviets are always patient with each other.

RELATIONS OF RUSSIANS WITH MINORITY GROUPS.

19. Since we lived in the Ukraine, the majority of the populace were Ukrainian. Russians and Jews were also represented. Occasionally I observed gypsies and Bessarabians traveling through the district. I did not notice any cases of ill-feeling among Ukrainians, Russians and Jews; they lived on friendly terms with one another. Frequently the leading positions in technical enterprises were occupied by Jews.

RELIGION

- 25X1X 20. [redacted] there were two religious circles in Rubezhnoye. The members of these groups met in individual homes and worshipped and discussed religious matters. Party authorities knew of these gatherings, but nevertheless tolerated them. I do not know any details concerning the number of members of these groups or how often they met.
21. During thunderstorms one could frequently see older Soviets making the sign of the cross. On several occasions one of the female laboratory workers asked my husband questions concerning the Bible. She must have read the Bible. There were no churches in Rubezhnoye. The churches in an adjacent settlement were being used as silos.

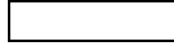
CRIME AND CORRUPTION

- 25X1X 22. Once when we watched the funeral of a Soviet official we were told by [redacted] that he had been assassinated in a forest near Rubezhnoye. There were several gangs active in the neighborhood; the entire district was unsafe.
23. Magaziny (department stores) were frequently burglarized. During the first years the apartments [redacted] were also burglarized so that we arranged for night watches among ourselves. Later 25X1X

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on, armed guards were provided during the night. Thefts of pocketbooks, watches, etc. in the magaziny or at the bazaar were a daily occurrence. Only the greatest watchfulness and precaution prevented loss.

IMPRESSIONS OF SOVIET ATTITUDES

24. The average Soviet was indolent and passive. Once in a while one met someone who had been abroad and who compared the living conditions of the foreign land with conditions existing in the USSR. Generally people were much too frightened to criticize the regime.
25. The average Soviet is impressed by the military success and the technical abilities of his country. However, this does not exclude a respect for foreigners such as the German technicians who were in the USSR.
26. The Soviet people consider that the United States with its capitalist warmongers is responsible for the present friction between the East and the West. The Soviet people seemed to be afraid of an attack from the capitalist West, especially the United States. One had the impression that the populace was indifferent to the war in Korea.

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